

6.9.26 pm

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Date: 06 September 2026

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0:00] Good evening everyone. A warm welcome to those who are watching online as well. We're going to be in this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise from Psalm 1.

! Psalm 1, and we'll sing the first two stanzas of the psalm in Gaelic. That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night. These two verses of Psalm 1, and after we've sung in Gaelic, Donald will lead us in prayer in English, sorry, in Gaelic.

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[2:14] Psalm 1, and we'll sing the first two stanzas of the psalm in Gaelic.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[5:14] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[10:14] Thank you. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Thank you, Donald.

We're going to sing again now to God's praise from Mission Praise 975. Mission Praise 975, before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea.

Mission Praise 975, before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea.

[11:48] A great, I'm Jesus, name is God, who ever lives and keeps for me. O, in his grave and all his hands, my name is written and all is Lord.

I know that while in heavenly skies, no tongue can give me hence depart. No tongue can give me hence depart.

Satan takes me through despair, and tells me all the guilt within.

A word I look and see him there, who lay that into all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free.

For God the justice satisfied, to look on him and pardon me. To look on him and pardon me.

[13:09] O, the iller, peace and love. My perfect spot is righteousness. The gates of grace, the gates of change above, I am.

The King of glory and of grace. But with himself I cannot die. My soul is purchased with his blood. My life is filled with Christ on life. With Christ my Savior and my God. With Christ my Savior and my God.

If you could turn in your Bibles now please to Revelation chapter 3.

Revelation chapter 3, the second last of the letters from Jesus to the church back then and still the church today. And this is the letter that is addressed specifically to the church in Philadelphia.

[14:31] So Revelation chapter 3, verse 7 to verse 13. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write the words of the Holy One, the True One, who has the key of David, who opens

I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews but are not, but lie. Behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you.

I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crime. Amen.

He who has an ear, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

Come Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire. Let us thine influence prove, source of the old prophetic fire,
fountain of life and love. Come Holy Ghost, for moved by thee the prophets wrote and spoke.

[17:08] Let us thine influence prove, source of the old prophetic fire, thou ten of life and love.

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love to be here but are not able to be here because of health or because of the the struggles that age brings so we ask lord that you would bless them and that you would minister them we pray as you would minister to us we pray also for those tonight who who had opportunity to come and who are well enough healthy enough to come but have no real desire to come to your house and we pray for them this evening we pray for some who may be your people we often sing that we are prone to wander and when we wander our appetite for your word fades and our priorities change that we put other things we put ourselves before you for any who may be drifting tonight we pray that you would draw them back that you would give them that you would give each one of us we pray a zeal for the things of god we pray for others who may not be christians at all you are the god who knows the hearts of all who are in our mind's eye and where there are those who who come to church from time to time but have not yet come to jesus we pray that even now in their homes even though they may not be watching even though they may be thinking about other things we pray that you would break into these minds these lives these hearts and that you would convict lord and convert and the holy spirit is our work we we see our sin we are convicted of our sin and we are pointed to the lord jesus and we know that sometimes that conversion that can happen in a church building as we sit under the word of god sometimes it can happen far from a church building and so we pray for those that you have burdened us for and we ask lord that you would convict them that you would convert them that you would draw them back if they are drifting even now we take a moment of silence and in our own hearts we bring to you the names of those that we wish to see saved and shining bright for the lord jesus so so hear our prayers we pray and be our work amongst us and we ask god this in jesus name amen if you could turn please and your bibles to revelation chapter 3 and we're looking at verses uh 7 through to verse 13 this evening there's a few teenagers here there's not so many teenagers here tonight they've also got they've obviously got no uh no um conviction that i'll be able to preach within the hour um but uh for the teenagers who are here i was thinking uh homework homework can be quite a struggle can't it it can be a struggle for the adults when we're asked to help and especially in our house uh when it comes to maths it can be hard to work out an answer uh to the question and so what i'm always looking for if i'm ever asked the question and i'm always second to be asked for help when it comes to homework if i'm ever asked the question uh how do you do this do this this problem how do you work out this answer i always look in the book or online or whatever the thing is for the worked example the most helpful thing that i find is when the teacher gives you a worked example a model answer that you can step through the stages and follow and the church in philadelphia is a bit like a worked example that jesus gives for people who are trying to figure out what should church look like because this is a jesus approved church and we know that jesus approves this church in philadelphia because in his assessment and his inspection of this church he has no criticisms of them everything that jesus says about the church in philadelphia is positive he's got lots of commendations no non-conformances no black marks so what does this church look like and i wonder if we were to ask the question what does a healthy good church look like i wonder what comes to our mind's eye when we think about a good church if you were looking or recommending to a daughter or a son who's going away to university i want you to go to to a good church what what would you describe what would you look for what would you ask them to look for when we think about a good church i think if we were to think generally about a good church if we were to think about a church that we would like to go and be part of we would probably think about a church with good numbers now i know instantly we're thinking it's not all numbers but we tend to like to go to a church when we go on our holidays where there's a good gathering there's a bit of a buzz about the place and that might be what comes into our mind's eye when we think about a good church we might think about good numbers we might think about a big session lots of deacons are all busy doing stuff or we might think about a church that's reasonably strong and steady the finances are are stable or we might think about a church that's pretty popular you know a church that has a good reputation in the wider church or even in the community that might be one of the things that we're looking for when we're thinking about a good church and so how do these criteria fit into jesus assessment is the church that jesus presents to us in philadelphia a church that's big and busy and rich and stable and healthy with a great reputation well let's take a look at this church and see what we find the first thing we can see about the church in philadelphia is it's a saved church these are saved people verse 7 and to the angel of the church in philadelphia write the words of the holy one the true one

who has the key of david who opens and no one will shut who shuts and no one opens so as this letter begins we have the the reminder here that the one who's writing this letter is jesus and yes john has penned this book of revelation but he is only writing what he's been given and this box set of letters this is not john's assessment this is jesus assessment he is looking into his church and he is the one who's writing and we know that because as we look at the phrases that are used here we see first of all that phrase holy one used who is the holy one jesus is the holy one he's the only one who ever lived a life that was sinless he is the only one who ever lived a life that was perfectly consistently thoroughly holy jesus is the holy one and jesus is the true one he's the only one who is himself the truth and who always speaks the truth there's no deceit and jesus he is the truth he's the holy one he's the true one and jesus identifies himself also in this introduction as being the one who has the key of david and there's some phrases phrases which they send us back to other places a bit like when you're on a web page there can be some phrases on a web page and uh there's a link to another page if you click on it it takes you somewhere else well this phrase the key of david if we click on that it takes us back to isaiah chapter 22 and verse 22 and in that chapter in isaiah the key of david was a key that opened the way into the king's presence and it had for a period been held by a man called shebna he was the king's treasurer he was the the king's chief officer but he was an untrustworthy character he was not worthy of the key so the lord removed him and the key was then given to eliacom who was good and who was trustworthy he was worthy of the king and jesus takes that picture he takes that story and he applies the phrase to himself and jesus says i have the key of david i hold the key of david one commentator brooks says to the lord jesus christ belongs the ultimate key of david for he has said no one comes to the father except through me it is christ himself that opens up the way to god he alone who saves and because these people in philadelphia because this congregation in philadelphia because they believed in jesus because they they trusted in jesus they were a saved people this was a saved church wasn't a social club it was a saved church jesus had opened the door of salvation for them and if we take the the most basic [33:45] encouraging application for ourselves at this point we have this truth the simple truth the simple truth to hold on to if we believe in jesus if we have come to jesus who is the way if we have trusted in him we are a saved people there's actually nothing more encouraging nothing more important than that if we have if we have come to jesus if we have trusted in jesus if we have found him to be the way we are saved safe yes there's trouble in the world yes we go through all kinds of scary things things but if we are trusting in jesus we are saved saved from sin saved for him so tonight if there's anyone here if there's anyone here or anyone who's listening who hasn't yet trusted jesus trust him if there's anyone here anyone with an earshot who hasn't yet come to jesus and asked for forgiveness of sin and asked for salvation ask him and if we do that we call upon the name of the lord as he did in philadelphia we are saved safe forever a saved church it's the first thing we know about this church the second thing is it's a secure church verse 8 jesus says i know your works behold i have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut now the open door that jesus speaks of here is first and foremost it's the door to heaven jesus says see i have set before you an open door no one's able to shut it and he's speaking about the door to heaven and yet he says in relation to this i know your works there seems to be works that are related to entering through the door to heaven and so we have to ask the question what works have the philadelphia the philadelphian believers done to secure access to heaven and that question jesus answers very clearly in john's gospel john chapter 6 verse 28 and 29 you don't need to go there but it says there then they said to him what must we do to be doing the works of god jesus answered them this is the work of god that you believe in him who he has sent and so just to reiterate what we said already that the people in philadelphia they believed in jesus he is the one who was sent he is the one who came from heaven to earth to be the savior and so jesus reminds them in this verse that that not only are they saved not only as the door of salvation the door of the door of heaven opened for them but it can't be shut their place in heaven

and that also is a simple gospel truth that brings such encouragement to us!

we have an enemy of our souls the devil and he loves to take every opportunity to rob us to rob us of any assurance that we have he wants to make us feel spiritually insecure so then he can he can pile on us all this anxiety and rob us of any sense of peace but jesus wants us to know that we are secure that we are secure that we are secure irreversibly if we believe in him so as we sang when satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within upward we look and see him there who made an end of all my sin because the sinless savior died my sinful soul is counted free for god the

just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me so to apply this in terms of a question before we move on have we done the work of believing in the one who was sent to be our savior that's all we have to do he has done the work on the cross he has shed his blood he has given his body to deal with our sin the work that is required of us is to believe in the one who is sent and if we believe in him we are safe and we are secure so if you're a christian here tonight take hold of these truths we can relax we can rejoice in these truths that jesus gives not just to them but to us save church secure church thirdly a serving church jesus says still verse eight it has a kind of double meaning i know your works behold i have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut one commentator hail says christ has placed before the church in philadelphia an open door here the word door he says can have two meanings first the door of heaven i've thought about that or second the door of opportunity for service to christ so jesus is saying to the church in philadelphia i've set before you an open door a door into heaven but he's also saying i've set before you an open door for service so what does an open door of service to christ look like and i wonder could jesus be saying to us here this evening behold i have set before you in north aris an open door which no one is able to shut and the reason i say that is because things here today don't look too different to the way that things were in philadelphia at the time of writing churches today are small certainly smaller than they used to be but that's quite a small gathering tonight it's the way it was in philadelphia the culture is multi-faith today here in the uk and increasingly even here it's not very tolerant of of anyone who says jesus is the only way to heaven that's the way things were in philadelphia and jesus says to them see i have set before you an open door to serve me and so the church in philadelphia they worked hard at serving jesus they weren't standing still they weren't in in maintenance mode they were in mission mode they weren't idle they were up and doing for jesus sake i always remember an elder from apple cross who's with the lord now but um he was a faithful quiet elder in apple cross and he used to often say his name was austrian ferguson and he would often say we need to be up and doing we need to be up and doing for the lord and that was the mindset of the church in philadelphia they weren't locked in their church building hiding from the world they were up and doing for jesus sake they were serving the lord going through this door day by day that the lord was giving them to to witness to to serve to to show themselves to be his people to speak a word uh and season to tell people about the the death of jesus as we thought about this morning and so jesus he sees this church and he sees that they're a serving church they're going through this open door of service and he approves them for it and if we are to receive the approval of jesus if we are to live in a way that that pleases him which every christian surely wants to do then we must be ready and willing available to serve jesus serving church secure church saved church fourthly it's a small church jesus says in verse 8 i know that you have but little power and we're not actually given any any numbers any metrics in this letter but uh if you read the commentaries the thought is that this congregation in philadelphia it was a small congregation one commentator says the phrase little power refers to the church's small size low worldly influence or humble resources it's a small church but notice here uh their lack of power uh their their low numbers their limited resources it didn't stop them serving jesus and i think as we look in on that church it should both encourage us and it should caution us and the encouragement um comes to us as we think about our mindset and sometimes how quick we are to be put off so often we look at ourselves whether we're looking at our own hearts our own lives or whether we look at our own fellowships and and we we think well what can i do you know i'm just i don't have much influence i haven't got i'm not a five talent guy what what can i do and we might think you know we're just a small congregation we're in a remote place i mean really realistically you know what can we do and the answer is well in jesus strength we can go through any door of service that he opens it doesn't matter about a smallness so that's to encourage us but there is a word of caution here as well because this should cause us never to look at a smaller church than us a church in a remote place maybe a church that's struggling to stay open we should never look at a small gathering like that and say well you know we're superior we would never speak out but we may look at a small congregation and think well what can they do we're much bigger that's not jesus way of thinking remember big ephesus jesus says to them yes you're big yes you're busy but your problem is you've lost your first love it's a big problem but small philadelphia gets jesus whole approval and no criticisms are leveled at this church small church fifthly it's a suffering church verse 8 still jesus says i know you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name behold i will make those of the synagogue of satan who say that they are jews and are not but lie! behold i will make them come and bow down

before your feet and they will learn that i have loved you so just to recap here jesus makes clear to the congregation in philadelphia that he has opened a door of opportunity for them to to serve him and so the church in philadelphia they they go through this door they serve but how does that go we might think well surely if jesus has opened the door there's going to be a good response you might think well surely if jesus has opened the door there's going to be lots of people at the services it's going to be a revival atmosphere it's going to be great times of refreshing and encouragement and peace is that how it is is that how it goes well no they they suffer they serve jesus they suffer for it they suffer as they're opposed by the religious people the religious jews they're thrown out of the synagogue the synagogue of satan as jesus calls it and because they were thrown out of the synagogue they're basically excluded from much of the business and the social life of that place they're outcasts they suffer and they suffer as they're opposed not only by the religious people but by the the secular culture that did not like this message about jesus being the only way they suffer and today we have to keep on remembering that there are millions of christians who suffer because they are faithful to jesus

[50:11] they're faithful to the gospel message we we must not forget them we must keep praying for them we'll hear something of that on wednesday evening we hear from blitheswood and today we can be thankful that we live in a country where we have the freedom to worship jesus in this way but as christians we need to be realistic about the fact that if we are going to serve jesus if we are going to proclaim that he is god the son that he is the only way through which we can be saved if we're going to see that we can expect to suffer in some way for that speak about the church there won't be too much in the way of pushback speak about jesus speak about sin and salvation speak about heaven and hell speak about only one way to heaven through christ put that on your facebook tonight put that on instagram watch the comments suffering church finally a steadfast church verse 10 jesus says because you have kept my word about patient endurance i will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth i am coming soon hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown to this church in philadelphia as we as we finish it's steadfast they kept the word of jesus they they held firmly to the truth even when there was such great pressure from the religious and the religious to compromise they don't they hold firm and jesus commends them for that and then jesus in in this letter he speaks to the believers that would come after them actually what jesus does as the letter continues is he speaks to he speaks to us and he makes clear that although this group of christians in philadelphia may be shielded from some more of the trials that were coming in speaking to us jesus says you can expect trials but when you experience them jesus says do what the believers in philadelphia did remain steadfast hold fast to what you have and then for encouragement jesus leaves us with a few promises he says in verse 12 the one who conquers i will make him a pillar in the temple of my god now a pillar that picture it's a picture of stability philadelphia for the geographers philadelphia was built on a fault line so they were used to earthquakes they knew what it looked like when when everything around them just crumbled when the earth shook but jesus says to this church in philadelphia and he says to us trust me he you'll never crumble i'll make you a pillar in the temple that will never fall he's thinking about the eternal things yes we'll fail yes we'll fall in this world but ultimately we will remain firm because of jesus

and then jesus says in verse 12 never shall he go out of it and i will write on him he's talking about the temple of god and he says never shall he go out of it and i will write on him the name of my god and the name of the city of my god the new jerusalem which comes down from my god out of heaven and my own new name and essentially what jesus says to these believers in philadelphia as he closes he says others may disown you others may reject you others may oppose you others may reject you and remove you evict you from their synagogues but i have claimed you you are mine and these verses connect with isaiah 43 don't they where the lord says to his people but now thus says the lord he who created you o jacob he who formed you o israel fear not for i have redeemed you i have called you by name you are mine when you pass through the waters i will be with you and through the rivers they shall not overwhelm you when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned and the flame shall not consume you for i am the lord your god the holy one of israel your savior this is a steadfast church that jesus is writing to the church that he owns that he claims and he says to us as we look in on this church tonight be like philadelphia he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches we'll pray lord god we thank you for your word and we thank you for your church we thank you lord jesus for these letters that were written for a group

of churches in asia many many years ago but we thank you that these letters were preserved and passed on and were determined to be read out even here this evening so speak to us through it we pray give us salvation if there's any who haven't yet trusted christ as savior we pray that even tonight they may and when we have salvation we pray that we would know the joy of being secure in christ we pray that you would help us to be like that church in philadelphia maybe not impressive in the eyes of this world maybe a church that suffered a lot for remaining firm and holding on to the truth about jesus we thank you that they were steadfast and we pray that you would make us steadfast as a church and as individual believers help us to be like these believers in philadelphia and we ask all this in jesus name amen we're going to sing the final praise which i don't know we've sang this in the main service before we've sang it often at the fellowships so it's a hymn that's not in the hymn book but

uh it's a hymn that very much connects with this letter when i fear my faith will fail christ will hold me fast the philadelphian believers could have sang this and we can sing this this evening so we'll stand to sing in just a moment to god's praise so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so!!

so so may may may may may may may may may may For my life he led and died, Christ will rule in us.

[60 : 47] Justice does mean Saturn's fight, evil rule in us. Race within to endless fight, evil rule in us, till our women start to shine.

When he comes and lies, evil rule in us, evil rule in us.

For my Savior loves me so, evil rule in us. Evil rule in us, evil rule in us.

For my Savior loves me so, evil rule in us. Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, be with us all now and forevermore.

Amen.